National Editor
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7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md, 21702
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Dear Editor,

Christopher Daly quotes University of Vermont political scientist Garrison Nelson's statement that Bernie Sanders "will be the fifth socialist to serve in the House." Nelson identified the fourth and fifth as Vito Marcantonio and Leo Isaacson, "of the more militant American Labor Party."

The American Labor Party was not socialist, nor were Marcantonio, who was my friend, or Isaacson, whom I knew. Moreover, what then was "more militant" is today's national policy, to a large degree of both major parties.

Marcantonio's first political activity was as Republican Fiorello LaGuardia's first campaign manager when La Guardia ran for the House. Marc was elected as both ALP and Democrat until he became, if I remember correctly, the first person to win the nomination of three major political parties and was elected without opposition.

Mostly he voted with the Democrats but he enjoyed excellent relations with the leadership of both political parties. I drove him to the White House for innumerable meetings with FDR and I sat in on meetings he had with Joe Martin, GOP House leader. Martin leaked to him for his use what the GOP feared using. Marc left one of his meetings with FDR with that President's agreement to create the Fair Employment Practises Commission if in return Marc would withdraw his HR1, a bill to create that commission.

There were times when Marc was the only Member to defend Eleanor Roosevelt on the floor when the extremists of the right assailed her.

When he was gerrymandered out of office he was succeeded by a man who was openly pro-fascist.

Fresh from law school his first job was as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan.

You young fogies are long on the cliches of journalism and political science but are short on the actualities of our history and political science.

Yesterday's "militant" does not become centrist because he changes. It is because our society and national concepts change and what in the past was regarded as militant, no matter how solidly it was within out Constitution, like equal rights for blacks and women, does become national policy.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg